

Emergency Locust Control Campaign  
in Mauritania and Senegal

Trip Report October 5 – 29, 2004  
By Bill Laspina

**Purpose of Trip:** Support aerial spraying operations for locust.

**Location:** Senegal, West Africa and Mauritania

**Position:** Emergency Locust Officer, Logistics Officer and Administration Officer on Disaster Response Team (DART):

**Introduction:** Favorable conditions in 2003 enhanced the reproduction of locust populations in Senegal and Mauritania. In June of 2004 it was estimated that 1.6 million hectares in Mauritania and 700,000 hectares in Senegal were infested with locust larva. By September with annual drying in Senegal and Mauritania swarms of locust formed and moved into the Senegal River Valley. These swarms constituted a major menace for crops and pastured lands. Based on this situation the U S Government decided to provided aid and resources to both countries.



A DART was sent to St Louis, Senegal to work on the overall operation of providing crop and pasture protection in Senegal and Mauritania. "The responsibility was given to the USAID/DART and the USAID Locust Task Force in Washington D C to put in place a strategy and operation that would achieve this objective."

The strategy formulated to attain the objective was:

Utilize small, agile planes that could spray at low altitude and treat immature adult locusts in the early morning while they were still roosting from the night before.  
Utilize two or more functional bases from where the planes could fly to either Mauritania or Senegal in order to achieve the largest reach along the river.  
Have the active participation of Mauritanian and Senegalese officials  
Choose the safest pesticide possible for the work and to take responsibility for its purchase and transport.

**Duties:** Assisted with the management of the Disaster Response Team (DART) in Senegal and Mauritania to support aerial spraying operations for locust. Other duties consisted of training personnel in the installation, operation of UHF and VHF base and mobile radio stations and GPS units. In St. Louis, Podor and Matam, I installed HF (Codan) Base Stations, 12 HF (Codan) Mobile Units and VHF Ground to Air Radio Stations. The VHF systems was provided by the National Interagency Radio Cache, Located at NIFC in Boise, ID.

I worked with Diplomat Freight Service, (DFS/OFDA contractor) establishing remote airport facilities for aircraft and pesticide storage, to include the assembling of pumping and generating

equipment. Other duties involved the refueling of aircraft, loading of pesticides and Ramp Attendant duties.

**Summary:** Many lessons were learned during this DART. The importance of pre-planning was visible everyday. In future operations communication equipment, personal protection equipment (PPE) and transportation issues with in the country need to be addressed before operations begin. Local customs, religious events and availability of commodities also need to be addressed before hand.

Over all this operation was a success. All energies were directed towards doing a good job that would benefit Mauritania and Senegal. During the month long operation a total of 382,850 hectares were treated for both countries.



